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The bride and the bridegroom are now conducted to the *marhwa*, and the latter is seated on the low wooden stool while the former sits either on a small mat of *palasa* leaves or on a low square made of mud and cow dung on his left. The *pandit* reads some sacred words, (supposedly from the Vedas) and as he does so the couple is instructed to throw *ghi* and rice coloured with *haldi* into the sacred fire. Each time the fire blazes up the priest utters the words *swaha, swaha*, meaning 'accepted', 'accepted'. This is really a *hom* offering. The *lagan* is sometimes read again at this stage.

The couple are asked to stand together, the girl being on the left of the boy. Some of the *sendur* is passed to him which he, with a silver coin, applies to the girl's forehead. As they stand there the *pandit* makes them promise to forgive each other at least seven times during their married life. After the promise the ends of their clothes are tied together, usually by the girl's sister. Into the knot that joins the two should be put a *takka* (a two-pice coin), some *haldi* and bits of a *supari* nut. Then begins the *bhanwar* or circumambulation of the bride and bridegroom about the sacred pole. If the couple are too young to live together and the marriage is not to be immediately consummated by her going to his house, there will be but five rounds of the *magrohan* For four of the five rounds the boy walks ahead, and the wife, the ends of the clothes still tied, follows, but on the fifth round the girl precedes the boy. The fire and pole are always kept to their right and they move round them in a clockwise direction. After the completion of each round they stop and the girl puts her right foot on the *sil* (the flat stone used for grinding spices). While she stands thus her brother or a representative makes a round of the pole with the *barain* containing the remainder of the *lawa*.

After the five rounds are completed (there would have been seven had the couple been old enough to live together) the two, still tied together, retire into the house, the girl leading the way. The women in a jesting manner attempt to bar their entrance and the pair have to force their way through. Rude songs and jokes of a sexual nature are now in order. Members of both parties have been given some of the seven handfuls of *lawa* kept in the booth and this is thrown upon the couple. Inside the house a lamp (*dip*) has been left under a basket, thus giving but little light to the room. The girl's mother asks the boy to take up the basket and blow out the light. He does not consent to do this until he receives a gift from his mother-in-law. Sometimes the challenge is for him to light a second lamp from the first. When he gets the desired gift he takes off the basket, but does not blow out the light. When this is done the knot is untied and his *maur*

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595 an economic asset. If there should be two or more woman in the family, one of whom is married and the other just kept, their respective rights were said to depend solely upon the will of the husband and it was not admitted that any of them had greater rights than the others. Their children have equal rights and no discrimination is made between [428] them. If the wife is barren and the other has sons, the property upon his death reverts to the sons. If both "wives" have sons it is divided at death according to the husband's expressed wish or by a decision of the *panchayat*.

We did not find much sexual laxity among the Kols; but the Hindus [831] assert, whether from knowledge or prejudice it is hard to say, that the sexual relations of the Kols are very loose. A Malguzar reported that in some villages under his jurisdiction where Kols happened to be in the majority he knew of at least one case of a Kol woman having several [837] husbands, a sort of polyandry, and that the men frequently exchanged wives.

DIVORCE. It is not uncommon for a man and his wife to separate 586 but as long as this separation is not sanctioned by the *panchayat* 623 it involves certain disabilities. The *panchayat* never takes the initia- 692 tive nor does it advise or suggest divorce—rather the opposite—but it has to act if the separation is to have official sanction. The usual grounds for separation and divorce are:

1. Sterility of the wife
2. Sexual unchastity of either
3. Quarrelsomeness in the home
4. Laziness resulting in the neglect of household duties and support of the family
5. Any tendencies such as thievery, frequent absences from home without apparent reasons, and the like

There are numerous variations in the process of securing this separation. It is usually considered more difficult for a man to get rid of his wife than it is for the wife to get rid of her husband. The matter is first officially brought to the attention of the local *panchayat* by either of the aggrieved parties. In some cases the local *panch* has full authority, but in Maihar State we found that if, after investigation, the local *panch* thought there was a good case for divorce, the matter [184 is referred to an intercaste *panchayat*; one which should include 564] members from seven different groups or castes. This seems to be an exception, and when asked what castes could act together they mentioned only three: Kol, Kurmi and Chamar.

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778 [271 776] in these vessels, and a tiny hole pierced in the bottom so that the water drops over the shrine. This is popular in warm weather when the *devi* should be cooled and the dripping water is pleasing to her.

17. *Tinsel* (*Tika*): Women often place a small round dot made [302] of lac tinsel on the centre of their foreheads. It is usually of red colour. These bits of tinsel are used in the shrines as well, and are stuck on it here and there. The *devis* like them and they help to attract them to the shrine.

18. *Stone* (*Patthar*). Bits of stone, usually pieces rounded in the bed of streams and longish in shape, are often found somewhere about the shrine. This may be an imitation of the *Salagrama* stones found [831] in connection with the worship of Vishnu. Sometimes they are of *lingam* type such as used in the worship of Siva.

This sums up the items usually found in Kol shrines. Probably no shrine we saw had all these components, though the Kaimur shrine came nearest to it. In addition to the above, there was at Kaimur [823] an unusual feature. This was a flat stone which had apparently come from some ancient Hindu temple and on which two figures were carved. The *panda* of the shrine claimed that it was brought from Rewa and [782 789] that the figures represented Sharda and Kalki. The stone must have weighed about eighty pounds, but, it was claimed, if a *hom* offering were performed when it was moved, it became very light and was [380] easy to transport. It was coloured red with *sendur*. It will have been noticed how imperfectly anthropomorphized the godlings are, and that no special images are required.

The only Kol shrine which had brick walls and a roof was found on the outskirts of Katni. The room measured about five feet square inside, was four feet high, and had a flat roof. This was called the shrine of Khermai, although on the flat top Barmai was said to dwell. [824] Also tongs were there for Sannyasi *deo*. The usual bundle of *kans* grass (*Saccharum spontaneum*) was on top of it.

778 793 The offerings, the lighting of the lights and the placing of the necessary parts, are all in the hands of the *panda*. It is not part of his work, however, to keep the shrine clean and properly plastered. This is the duty of the women of the village, and they take turns in doing it. The shrine is plastered at least once a week and cleaned oftener. The sweepings, including ashes, dust, bits of cocoanut shells and the like, are not swept to the ground beside the shrine, but are carefully put into a basket by the woman who is doing the work. If they should be thrown out upon the earth, evil will result, so they are carried to a stream or a tank and thrown into the water. They are sacred ashes, likened unto the ashes following a cremation and must be respected.

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796 successful the ceremony. Last of all the whole is covered with a layer of dry grass.

[177 793] The time for the actual lighting is learned from the Hindu *pandit* who knows horoscopy and can tell it exactly. Theoretically the pile should be lighted at full moon, when the sun and the moon are exactly [821] in opposition. This may occur before sunset, and if so, the pile should be lighted as soon as dusk has fallen. It was to be lighted in the case we investigated at 3 a.m. When the hour has come, all who take [522] part in the festivities gather round the sacred pile with much laughing and vulgar jesting. A cocoanut is usually broken just as the fire is touched off. The fire is lit from burning cow dung cakes; and before [237 372] touched off, it is carried by the *panda* seven times around the pile which is always kept to his right, so that he goes clockwise about it. The glowing cow dung cakes are then inserted into the wood and grass drawn over it, and the fire begins. One should never blow upon this fire to get it started. It should be fanned, but never blown from the mouth. Now the whole group will circumambulate the fire in a clockwise direction, throwing wheat or other gifts into it. Later on, as the fire dies down, some daring youths may jump over it or run through it. As the group goes about the fire, they shout: "*Hori ha, Hori mata*, take thou this wheat our *Hori mata*." *Hori* is used for *Holi*. Singing is kept up all night, and more wood may be thrown upon the fire.

796 With the lighting of the fire, the obscenity of this festival is loosened, and may be resorted to all night and the next day. Obscene 786 songs of the *Kabiri* type in which the sexual act is described with 831 appropriate gestures are sung. These are not directed against any particular individual, and no offense should be taken by anyone. A woman may snatch away a bit of the clothes of a man known to her, such as his cap or *pagri* or cloth flung over his shoulder. He must give her a present before he can recover it, and the hat should be filled with *gur* (raw sugar) and sweets before he can get it back. Sexual license is permitted at this time.

[787] Certain prophecies about the coming harvest are made by observing the way the fire burns, the smoke rises, and how it is carried away by the wind.

On the day following liberties of all kinds are taken with people. Dust, mud, dirt, and water coloured red, are thrown over passers-by. Sugar garlands are exchanged and indecent remarks passed. *Kabiri* [533] songs and others celebrating Krishna's love affairs are sung. The more shameless a lowcaste man can be, the more lustily he is cheered by his companions. There is no redress for those insulted on this

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occasion, as such acts are not considered really reprehensible if done during *Holi*.

Jawara. This is the most important of the festivals observed by the Kols and while linked to Hindu observances, is nevertheless probably a much more primitive affair than many Hindu ceremonies. The *Jawara* festival comes twice a year, in the Spring in the Hindu month of *Chaita* (March-April), and the Fall in the month of *Kunwar* (September-October). The former begins on the first day of the Hindu year in the month *Chaita*, and lasts for nine days ending on *Ramnavami* or the birthday of Rama. In the Fall it comes during the first nine days of *Kunwar* and ends just before *Dasara* on the tenth of *Kunwar*. The Fall festival comes just before the sowing of the winter crop of wheat, and the Spring festival comes just after it has been reaped.

The *Jawara* festival is entered into by the Kols with great enthusiasm, and it is during this period that the *bawa* or spirit possession is most common. During the nine days of the festival, singing, dancing and the beating of drums are kept up almost incessantly after nightfall.

It is called *Jawara* festival after the *juari* plant, a large millet, *Sorghum vulgare*. As this is not grown to a great extent in Central India, it is more usual to find that wheat rather than *jawar* is used in the ceremonies. On the first day of the nine days' celebration, a room or portion of a room is plastered and made ready for the sowings. A ceremonial bath should be taken first, and the one who plants the wheat should care for it the rest of the nine days. The wheat is then sown in small earthen vessels or sometimes in leaf dishes filled with earth, which is well-manured so that the wheat will grow nicely. It is watered daily and a few drops of milk are sprinkled over it in order to make it grow even better. The water should never be put on the plants directly from the hand, preferably the roots of a barley plant should be dipped into the water and thus it is sprinkled upon the growing plants. The vessels are kept indoors and probably not far from one of the household goddesses. It is said that all Kols do not sow this wheat, only those whose forefathers did so, or perhaps also those who have made some vow before a deity.

During the nine days of this celebration almost all the Kol deities are invoked and worshipped, and there is much singing before the village shrines, and *bawas* are common. The eighth night is the one most likely for a *bawa*, for that night all the people in the village are required to fast. During the nine days, the person caring for the wheat should fast in the evenings. The long stalks have sprung up by this time and are now ready to be taken out.

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1. *Dadar* or *Dadra*. This is by far the most common kind sung by Kols and is a well-known melody sung all over northern India. H. A. Popley in his book *The Music of India* says: "The *Ghazal* and the *Dadra* are two Hindustani melodies. They consist as a rule of *Aniara* only, sung alike to a simple melody in syncopated time, which is known as Pashto." Kols may sing this form on many occasions and at any time of the day and night, and its use is not limited as certain others are. It is used at the *Chhatthi* rejoicings when the women sing and dance on the sixth day after the birth of a child; it is used throughout the wedding cycle; and may even be used at times of religious worship. Sometimes the words are chaste and beautiful, and again a *dadra* song may contain abuse as is common at the times of weddings.[1] 533 [846 585 796]

2. *Bhagat*. This is predominantly the song of worship. Some Kols say it is used for the *devis* and *devtas* while *bhajans* are used for Bhagawan. This does not appear to be the actual practice however. The root of the word is from *bhakti* which means "passionate devotion," and a *bhagat* is generally sung before the gods and goddesses. It is sung when the *jawara* is sown. At times when men become controlled by the *devi* it is this type of song that helps to bring on the emotional excitement resulting in "possession". The words may apply to any occasion and the rhythm varies from the *dadra* and the *rai*.

3. *Bhajans* are religious songs, but are supposed to be addressed to the higher powers, and Bhagawan is generally mentioned. However we found an instance of a *bhajan* being addressed to Sharda.

4. *Rai*. This type implies songs of Krishna and Radha. There are various rhythms in use, but its content, as far as words are concerned, is frequently obscene. Like the two following types it is sung mostly at the *holi* season. [831]

5. *Phag*. This is named from the month of Phagun for it is supposed to be sung only during that particular month, and may be called a spring song. Phagun is the eleventh month in the Hindu year and covers the last half of February and the first half of March. This corresponds with part of the *holi* season, and some say the *phag* type of song should be sung only during the last fifteen days of the season. The contents of the majority of *phag* songs are not respectable and it is very difficult to get one sung for an outsider; they are some- [805]

1 *Op. Cit.*, p. 90.
2 Elwin calls the *Dadaria* the true forest songs of the Baigas. *The Baigas*, p. 438.

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what reluctant to repeat them unless they are sung under emotional excitement.

6. *Kabiri*. This is another obscene type sung mostly at the *holi* season. It is said that the sexual act is described with obscene gestures. Kols say that it is called Kabiri as Kabirdas made and sang them. This is certainly a fiction. There may, however, be some Moslem influence in the songs, though this is open to doubt.[1]

7. *Dohari*. A type of song in which the verses are made up of two lines. The word comes from *doha* meaning a couplet. The full dohari has twelve couplets of two lines each.

8. There have been some other types and varieties of types named by Kols, but no information about them seems to be available and Kols themselves do not know the niceties of them. Among such may be mentioned Kotwerhai, Bhumhai, Kolhai (said to be a form of the *dadar*), Badhwa, Katili, Birha, Bihari, Chhauhar and Barahmasi. Examples of most of these kinds will be found below.

Those songs are sung by both men and women, though on certain occasions one of these groups may do the most of the singing. Women, for example, do all the singing on the sixth night after birth (*Chhatthi*); both sing at the time of wedding; at the periods of special religious worship it is generally the men who do the singing, although it is not unknown for the women to take a part.

KOL SONGS. Most of the songs sung by Kols are composed for special occasions, and the following songs are selected from a number collected by us in our visits among the Kols. They give an interesting insight into the Kol outlook on life. One finds the joys and sorrows of youth and love. An appreciation of nature is also evident, while many of the songs border on what many would consider indecent and questionable. Many songs centre about Ram and his victory over Rawana. Only a few of these are included. In Appendix III brief notations on certain of the songs will be found. The meanings of some of the songs are obscure and in many of them there are insinuations not easily grasped. In some cases only the composers, probably, know to what the songs allude and any translation is far from satisfactory. It is believed that the songs which follow are fairly typical of Kol songs in general. They are arranged topically in the main, though some songs fall into more than one classification. There are six divisions: 1. Songs of Nature; 2. Life: its Joys and Sorrows;

[1] How Kabir's name came to be associated with these songs is a mystery. Kabir's songs are highly respectable and well-thought of. See above page 46.

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Phâgun	..	February-March.
Chaita	..	March-April.
Baishâka	..	April-May.
Jeth	..	May-June.

III. LOVE AND INTRIGUE.

1. A *dâdrâ* from Katni. The *lotâ* is a brass vessel used for carrying liquids. A cord is frequently tied about its neck and it is lowered into a well in order to bring up water. See note on 6, 7 below.

2. A *kâfilî* from Imalhapur. This is a teasing song and in this case the *kafilî* is addressed to a young maid of beauty. The *pânwâlâ* prepares and sells the *pân*, a mixture of betel nut, lime and tobacco wrapped in Piper leaves (*Piper betel*).

3. A *dâdrâ* from Katni.

4. A *dâdrâ* sung at the wedding season: from Jubbulpore. The suspicious husband is assured that his wife's smiles and blushes are innocent, and are directed to no other man. The first line should be repeated four times.

5. A *dâdâr* from Katni. The *dhîmar* is a member of the fisherman caste, but is used in another sense.

6, 7. These are both *dâdrâs* from Katni. The symbolism of these two songs is perhaps obvious. Sexual matters are referred to by the men as entering a house, as a lotus on a pond or in terms of getting water from the well.

8. A *nîl* from Katni.

9. A *biyâ*, or wedding song; sung at the time of the circumambulation of the sacred post. From Salavara. The terms of relationship are noted in the text of the translation. The intrigue is rather complicated and it is evident that the mother-in-law, who ought to be on her guard, is a simpleton and does not realize what is going on. The symbolism is apparent.

IV. SONGS OF SOCIAL EVENTS.

1. This song is called *chhaunhar* as it is sung on the sixth night after the birth of a child. The woman complains that the in-laws care nothing for her birth-pangs. Given by women near Katni.

2. A *badhwâ*, a song sung by women when a male child is born. The song is kept up for long periods and is repeated again and again. It is essentially a song of congratulation. Ayodhya was the place of Ram's birth. This song given by women near Katni.

3. Another *chhaunhar* or sixth-night song from Katni. A Kajali forest (dense—black as *kajal*) is one inhabited by elephants. The swing has a sexual symbolism.

4. A *dâdrâ* from Imalhapur. The *Pûrabiyâs* are dwellers in the eastern parts. There is a Purbiya subdivision of Chamars. (Briggs, *op. cit.* page 24). The *Baghels* are men of Baghelkhand.

5. A *nîl* from Katni.

6. A marriage *dâdrâ* from Barela and sung as a teasing song. *Marwâ* or *marhwâ*: the wedding booth.